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ART. X.—*The History of the Jews, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time.* By Rev. H. H. MILMAN. 3 vols. 18mo. New-York. 1830.

To notice this work as a sacred history, is the province of other journals; we shall therefore speak of it as we should of any other record of ancient or modern times. And we know of no subject of more curious or deeper interest, than a narrative of the fortunes of this singular race, which may be traced from the earliest time to the Christian era, like the course of some mighty river. Even then, when their national existence is broken up, they are not lost among the nations; but still are like the stream, which keeps the color of its waters far out upon the open sea. We are glad to see that Mr. Milman, while he approaches the subject with proper respect, has treated it as a philosophical history, so far as the popular character of his work admitted. The friends of religion have done injury to the Scriptures, by the sternness with which they have kept this history apart from all others. They have given the impression that it would not bear examination; nor is it singular that acute minds, finding it defended with the same sort of earnestness with which one upholds a doubtful character, should have entertained suspicions of its truth. But now, they begin to apply the advice of Gamaliel to this subject as well as to all other pretensions; and without surrendering its sacred claims, treat it as a matter open to fair discussion, knowing that it cannot lose its interest, so long as any one desires to explore the mysteries of human nature. The eye of such an observer must be arrested by these floating remnants of a once distinguished race, clinging to fragments of a vessel which went down thousands of years ago, and looking for relief, though so long delayed, with a courage that never falters. He will consider it well; for there is nothing like it in all the history of man.

The effect of this disposition on the part of theologians, to take larger views of this subject than have been common in former years, has had the happiest effect on the credit of the Hebrew Scriptures. Since discussion has been invited, various difficulties have disappeared. Voltaire could not again shake the faith of nations in the story of the Deluge, by saying that the shells found on a mountain were carelessly thrown there by pilgrims; but impartial science, without fear, favor or affection, declares, that the account of the Flood is as legibly

written on the face of the world, as in the Sacred writings. History explains the doubtful narratives; philology clears up the obscure language; monuments of antiquity, dug out from their Egyptian graves, give the testimony of ages past to their truth; taste delights in the grandeur of their inspirations;—there never has been a time when intellectual men relied more upon the authority, or more highly estimated the value of this authentic record of the childhood and youth of the world.

Objections of this kind being removed, the early history of Israel is invaluable as a record of life and manners. In this respect it comes before the poems of Homer, which however fabulous in point of fact, are undoubtedly true to nature. Nothing can be more interesting than to trace the simple story of these nomadic tribes, and observe how the manners of a people, usually so variable, have in those regions remained the same for thousands of years, as if for the purpose of affording convincing evidence of the truth of the history to the latest generations. We find the same liberal hospitality, dashed with occasional traits of wildness; the same truth sternly observed in some respects, and sorely violated in others, which even at this day distinguish the wandering Oriental chieftain. Those who cannot bear to have it suggested that Abraham was deficient in strict veracity, or that Jacob procured the birthright, which made him the head of the clan, by an unworthy artifice, should remember that the divine Ulysses is praised by Homer, for his talent in fabricating some new romance, to be given as his own personal history to every host that entertained him. This shows plainly enough, that such artifices were then thought rather worthy of admiration for their ingenuity, than of censure for their defect of morality. We have no reason to expect to find the patriarchs much beyond their own times in these respects; certainly not, if in those times these things were not regarded as wrong. We find in them a lofty sense of honor, a warm attachment to their clan, a ready generosity to strangers, and that high devotion to their household gods, which supplies the place of local attachment in those, whose habits of life compel them to wander;—above all, a veneration for the ashes of their fathers, which implies the existence of much good feeling in every people where it is found. To expect to find them shining examples of Christian morality, besides that it is against nature, is an injury to their name. It leads many who read their history, to withhold the credit due to them for their

virtues, and to condemn them for their violation of moral rules which they never knew. Many have thus been surprised and troubled by these faults of the patriarchs, who would have seen that they deserved the respect which the Hebrews paid them, had they been taught to judge of their characters by the standard of their own times. In this as in many other respects, has the Sacred history been injured by the misguided zeal of its friends.

The most striking peculiarity about this history is the air of truth that surrounds it. There is nothing of that mythology, which brings confusion into all other histories, and which can be distinguished from the truth by internal evidence alone. The ungracious process of separating the false from the true, when it is done by a stern hand like that of Niebuhr, affects us with a feeling similar to that with which the Scotch covenanters regarded the winnowing machine, believing that it was a contrivance by which men took the work of Providence into their own hands. We have no confidence in that which depends on the judgment of a historian, however wise or learned he may be. Fortunately there is no such perplexity attending the Hebrew history ; it can be as distinctly traced, as the river of their country from its source in Libanus, till it loses itself in the waters of the Dead Sea. The characters are precisely such, as suit our imaginations of the times. Abraham, the adventurer, is the brave, calm, and dignified old chieftain ; Isaac, the cultivator, is easy and unambitious, but asserts with hereditary spirit, the purity and honor of his clan ; Jacob is gentle and intriguing, and we must remember, that in such a state of manners, cunning is regarded as a virtue ; Esau, the hunter, is rough and manly, easy to be imposed upon, and though naturally incensed at first with the brother who has defrauded him of the chieftainship of his tribe, ready to meet him with an affectionate welcome in after years. Here is a case, in which it is necessary to remember, that among uncultivated nations a successful stratagem, like theft among the Spartans, brings honor, not disgrace. Esau was to blame for his rashness in parting with a high distinction, which according to their ideas, he should have died sooner than surrendered ; but Jacob, though he exulted in his success, never felt as if he had done right towards his brother. Compare his jealous and timid conduct with that of Esau at their next meeting, and you see all the consciousness of transgression. His own household read

and treasured the lesson he had given;—and he cannot condemn them when their jealousies and quarrels fill the residue of his life with woe. All is truth and nature, from Hagar turning away from her child in the desert that she might not see him die, to Joseph, bursting into tears when he can no longer disguise himself from his brethren. No inspiration, divine or human, ever drew a more perfect picture of life and manners than this.

At a later period of this history the treatment of the Canaanitish nations appears, in the opinion of many, as a defacing stain; and it is true, that there are few grosser acts of inhumanity on record. But why does this surprise or disappoint us? Why do we expect to find them towering above the manners of the times, especially when we know that such deeds were not then regarded as dishonorable or guilty? The hero of ancient war, Achilles, would be a monster of hardness and cruelty in our times; but we do not wrong him by such a comparison, and we are bound to give the same measure of justice to the Jews. And as for their excesses bringing dishonor on their faith, we may as well charge the outrages committed by the crusaders, upon the Christian religion. Unless it appears that there is something in the religion that sanctions such excesses, they must be charged upon those passions, which under every form of religion, prevail in the hearts of men, and display themselves with greater or less fury, according to the amount of moral sentiment which governs the nations in those ages when such deeds were done.

Perhaps, however, this impression could not have existed so long, without a complete misapprehension of the Hebrew law. With due submission to Christian divines, we think they have indulged themselves in too strong contrasts between the Hebrew and Christian institutions. Our Saviour, in his sermon on the mount, is contrasting his own precepts, not with those of Moses, but with those of the Scribes and Pharisees. The Hebrew Lawgiver did not command his people to hate their enemies;—and the maxim ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,’ was not a direction for private revenge, but for legal penalty. It is true that there is nothing in his law so broad and comprehensive as Christian benevolence, which is limited neither by valleys nor mountains, rivers nor oceans, but goes every where, where evil can be prevented or good can be done. Still there is nothing of the savage fierceness, which many have supposed

that it enjoined, and then, by an easy error, regarded as the cause of the cruelty of the Jews in their bloody campaigns. On the contrary, many of its precepts require the most delicate humanity. It threatens him who abuses the deaf or misleads the blind ; it forbids the creditor's going into the house of the debtor to take his pledge ;—whoever sees his neighbor's cattle wandering, is directed to drive them home ; and the comfort even of beasts and birds is provided for in this remarkable law. It is true, that there were cities of refuge provided for those who had shed blood ; but this, instead of being a bounty offered to revenge, was a provision for securing the quiet operation of the law, which would otherwise have been anticipated by the avenger of blood. Doubtless there were offences which Moses did not forbid ; it was because the moral sentiment of the people would not have sustained him ; still when he could not secure the whole, he was contented with a partial good, and he would not endanger all his commands, by insisting too strongly on an impracticable one. The truth is, then, that the institutions of Moses were not calculated to encourage, but rather to restrain the strong passions of the Jews. There were cases in which he enjoined severity as a duty upon the soldiers, but this is explained, if we remember that he was a statesman rather than a teacher of religion. A statesman in the present day, however sincere in his profession of Christianity, must, in case of war, govern himself by the usages of war, however much he may detest them. The duty of Moses was to take such measures as seemed necessary to the security of the people, whose interests were confided to his hands. He had no right to indulge his own feeling, whatever it may have been ; and it is easy to be seen, that in such a state of the world, mildness and forbearance would have been little better than weakness and folly. As to the original question of invasion, no one can doubt, that the Hebrews *believed* that they had a perfect right to dispossess the inhabitants of the land ; and where should they have gone to learn that their pretension was unfounded ? It is not probable that one of the barbarians who were driven out, would have complained of the injustice of the war, however he might have lamented its results ; and certainly it is not for us, in this distant time, to try these deeds by a standard of morality which was then unknown. We could cast the stone at former ages with a better grace, if the hands of our own age were unstained with blood unrighteously shed,

and if we had never joined in the acclamations that follow the march of destroyers. It strikes us as quite too hard, in an age that has cheered with all its heart the invader of the world, to pretend to be severe upon the invader of a solitary province thousands of years ago. Our own nation will do well to hold its peace, whenever the extermination of the heathen is the subject of discussion; for we have reason to think that the Hebrew, who is upbraided with this blot upon his history, can find a parallel in our own annals, and that in no distant years, in an age too, when ignorance can no longer be pleaded in defence of the unjust.

The moral character of David is another of these circumstances, which have perplexed many readers of the history of Israel; but we apprehend that it is owing to their not reflecting on the position in which he stood. He led a life of constant warfare; he was hunted like a wild beast in the desert, and was more than once struggling for life in the power of an adversary, whose mind, naturally generous, was made almost insane by jealousy and despair. The condition of the country was any thing but peaceful; in the days of the Judges, the highways were deserted on account of the unsettled state of the nation; the wild natives were not driven out; David himself dispossessed them of their last foot-hold in Jerusalem. Under these circumstances, we expect to find the restorer of the fortunes of his country, a brave and successful soldier, artful in resorting to stratagem where force was unavailing, distrustful of the characters and designs of others, and perhaps deficient in that regard for domestic peace and duty, which is not apt to be found in men who spend their lives in partisan warfare. The virtues to be expected from him, are such as are valued in such times. And in these he does not appear to have been wanting; witness the lofty generosity with which he cast away the water, which some of his chiefs had procured at the hazard of their lives; denying himself this indulgence in his burning thirst, that he might not encourage such desperate adventure; witness, too, the manliness, with which, when Saul was in his power, he disdained, like the son of Morni, to stab a sleeping foe, and thus called a gush of tenderness from the rock of the veteran's heart. Sufficient evidence of this trait of character may be found in the elegy, unrivalled for its plaintive beauty,

‘Antelope of Israel! slain on thy heights,  
How the brave are fallen!’

Those who condemn this monarch for not displaying an example of moral excellence beyond his age, should ask themselves what reason they have for expecting to find him a Christian. Morality is something sure and unalterable, and the crime of David admits of no defence ; but moral excellence is a comparative thing, and cannot be determined without an estimate of means and advantages for improvement ; neither can the moral demands of the age be left out of view. Perhaps some future historian, in describing the domestic history of his Most Christian Majesty, or of the Defender of the Faith, may point out their infidelity in the domestic relations, as a reproach upon the Christian religion ; the answer applicable in all such cases would be, that their faith was not the cause of their excesses, and that flattering names, assumed or given, were no index of moral or religious character.

It was in the reign of David that the Hebrew nation rose to its greatest height of power and glory ; and this is the period of all their history, which the Hebrews dwell upon with most delight. The object of Moses had been, to make them, not a military, but a religious people ; or, more properly, to make their religion the groundwork of their civil institutions. With this view, he made agriculture their principal occupation ; and to prevent any landholder from acquiring injurious influence, he provided that every estate sold should revert to its original possessor or his representatives every fiftieth year. His plan might have succeeded, had the Hebrews taken peaceable or even sudden possession of Canaan ; but when they first came near its borders, it appeared that their quiet residence in Egypt had unfitted them for the hardships of war. He was obliged to take them back into the desert, and there to prepare them, by long discipline of suffering, for the severe campaigns that were to succeed. The new generation that came up, acted their part bravely in the war, but meantime became incapable of resting under the simple republican government prescribed ; republican it certainly was, so far as republicanism consists in respect to the power and wishes of the people.

Through the whole term in which they were governed by Judges, all improvement, and even happiness, was prevented by their turbulent dispositions. At times they turned their arms against each other ; but foreign foes took courage from their disunion, and armies came down upon them in succession, whose inroads they found it hard to repel. At one time a



Mesopotamian extended his conquests to the Jordan ; then a coalition under Eglon was formed against them ; this was followed by an effort of the Canaanites to recover their country ; and hardly were they driven back, before the wild hordes of the desert came in like a flood. For a long time they suffered under the yoke of the Philistines, the most formidable of their enemies, who, though not Canaanites, sympathised with the former possessors of the land. All this confusion, arising from foreign and domestic war, made it impossible for them to improve in the arts of peace, or even to maintain their equal institutions. Samuel appeared in the character of a reformer ; but the result was that it became necessary to appoint a king. It is not the least surprising thing in the history of Moses, that he had foreseen this unfortunate result, and provided for it in his law. When Saul, like the kings of the Iliad, assumed the pontifical in addition to the royal power, it was thought proper to select one less ungovernable in his passions, and thus the shepherd David came to the throne.

What personal exertions were made by David for the improvement of his people, does not now appear ; but it is not more certain that Alfred exalted the private happiness and public character of his nation, than that the same benefit was conferred on Israel by the most illustrious of its kings. Miserable as his own dwelling was, the heart of his country was glad ; the sun was shining out after all the changes of the storm ; the regal authority was established, not indeed beyond the reach of resistance, but where it was not shaken by every blast. The Divine presence was to be secured by raising a temple lasting as human hands could make it ; and all the indications of Heaven seemed to promise ages of rest and glory. It is true, he was aided by circumstances. The Hebrews were just passing from the troubles of war to more than the ordinary luxuries of peace, and they were then on the turning point ; their military virtues were not lost, but softened by that prosperity, which melted away the bands of their union, and the foundations of their greatness, in the reign of his successor. But this favorable state of the national affairs was owing to his firmness in government, and enterprise in war ; his power was felt from Egypt to the Euphrates ; he had bound the tribes and provinces into a kingdom, which might have been happy and glorious, could it always have been ruled by a mind as vigorous as that which created it.

We must gather the state of improvement at this time from circumstances. We cannot tell precisely how high it rose, nor how far it extended ; but we have evidence enough that the arts were prosperous, and that the mind was not neglected. Moses had not extended much patronage to the arts, intending probably that his people should depend upon other countries for mechanical skill, while they drew their subsistence from the soil. They did depend upon them, at least for instruction ; but no institutions could repress their taste for experiment and adventure. From the song of Deborah, we learn, that, when the other tribes went to battle, Asher dwelt in his sea-shore havens, and Dan lingered among his ships. But they had not many wants which they could not themselves supply ; they had the arts of weaving, dyeing, and embroidery ; of building, which was regulated by law ; of working in the metals and clay ; and when their own resources failed, Tyre and Sidon were ready to supply them. Except some slight and doubtful references to astronomy, we know little of their progress in science ; there were few demands for it in that age. Solomon afterwards wrote on the subject of natural history, and all their writings show that they were accurate observers of the grand and beautiful in nature. We know that the credit of Solomon's observations has been lately thought to be shaken in an important point, by the researches of Huber, who has shown that ants, instead of preparing their food for the winter, are torpid throughout that season ; but we have strong reasons for doubting, whether the observations of that naturalist extended to the Holy Land.

The intellectual cultivation of the reigns of David and his son, appears most brilliantly in the Sacred Poetry, the remains of which still light up the hearts of Christians, and afford them eloquence in their praise of God. There are splendid specimens, scattered here and there in the history ; and Moses himself was distinguished for this, as well as other intellectual powers, long before the time of which we speak ; but that David should find heart to cultivate this talent in the breathing intervals of war, or the gloom of a palace, which disunion and sorrow had made almost as dreary as the grave ;—that he should tower in a walk of imagination and praise, so little lower than that which the angels tread, and draw sounds from his harp which should echo thousands of years downward upon the stormy waves of time ;—we regard as almost a miracle of power. If not the inventor of this noble art, he reduced it to a system ;

he divided the four thousand Levites into choirs, who were to sing these magnificent inspirations, in which

‘Devotion borrowed Music’s tone,  
And Music took Devotion’s wing.’

No better proof of the superiority of this age of Israel is needed, than these poems of David. One such orb is enough to make the whole heaven light. He excels in every variety of expression, from the warlike shout of the silver trumpet to the low wailing of the harp’s most delicate string; and even now, his are the anthems with which the walls of our churches resound; they are heard in the retreat of penitence and prayer; they are the accents in which the last breath of the dying expires; when civilization breaks the silence of the desert, they are the first sound it hears; they have risen upon the air, where God alone could hear them, in the lonely African wastes and the midnight of the Northern seas; and in many a coming generation, though the human mind may put forth new powers, such as no prophet’s tongue can tell, we believe they will still be the language in which the heart shall pour itself out to Heaven.

It is very interesting to observe how exactly the great founder of the nation had anticipated all these things. He had apprehended, that the Israelites, weary of internal disorders, and misled by the example of the nations round them, would require a king. This was ominous to his institutions, because their aim was to secure the welfare of all, and not the ambition of one. Still, if the king could be induced to act with a tolerable regard to the spirit of the law,—to encourage the arts of peace,—to hold out no direct encouragement to commerce, which might bring in luxury, but to leave the wants of the people to open communications with other countries as fast as they were required,—to refrain also from numbering the people for purposes of conscription, which might engender a taste for offensive war, it might be hoped that the system would endure till its purposes were answered. But it is plain, that Moses looked with a painful foreboding upon their future fate; he saw the hollowness of kingly glory; he knew that such distinction, like the wealth of the temple, would invite oppression from other nations, while it destroyed the energy which was needed to resist it; besides, he knew that it was impossible to set bounds to the ambition of princes, and that tyranny was the natural growth of authority residing in the hands of

one ; thus, when he had provided every safeguard in his power, his last words expressed a dark and awful foreboding of their doom. It was darkly and sadly fulfilled. Solomon, the favorite of Heaven, became the most fatal violator of his law. He opened the avenues of commerce, and wealth poured in its golden flood ; he entered into a forbidden alliance with the Egyptian king ; he gave an example of luxury, which his people were not slow to follow, and the decorations of his empire, which made it the envy and wonder of the world, became the weight that ground it to the dust.

Every reader of the prophets knows how the nations of Israel and Judah kept on their downward way to ruin, sometimes in jealous alliance, at others with furious enmity. The storm gathered and hung on all the surrounding mountains. The voices of the prophets, like the trumpets of Sinai, rose louder and louder, and the last beams of divine mercy were dying away. Israel perished first. Judah and Benjamin were one, and all the Jews had a common interest in their prosperity and fame ; but ten different tribes, different in habit and feeling, and unused to submission of any kind, could not be held together. Their existence depended upon their union, but when they were once divided, national attachment could no more re-unite them, than the attraction of nature can bind up the fragments of the broken rock. No thoughtful mind can help admiring the wisdom of Moses, and his prophetic knowledge of what constitutes a state. The world, even in this age of light, hardly knows that the greatness of a nation does not consist in the sweep of its boundaries, nor the splendor of its victories, nor even in the grandeur of its monuments of stone. His object was to establish a system, that should protect the rights and happiness of all : he considered those monuments which could not be raised without oppression, monuments of dishonor, not of glory, and would have his people influence others, not by the terror of their arms, but the persuasion of their example.

The fate of the ten tribes after they were carried to Assyria is unknown. The sacred history informs us, that they were placed in Helah and Habor, by the river Gozan, names that are wholly unknown. If with some writers who are easily satisfied, we could assume that Gozan meant the Ganges, a hypothesis founded principally upon the striking resemblance of the two words, we should be at no loss ; for the dispersion

of Israel has been going on, ever since the nation began to decline ; and before the Christian era, they were found in every known region of the world. It would be easy to pronounce any of the race children of the captivity, and the great question would be at once decided ; but till this is put beyond a doubt, the imagination must be at liberty to trace them any where in the heart of Asia, or to find their descendants in the Indians of our country,—a theory which seems to have been recommended by its extreme improbability to various ardent writers. It is true, that the public attention was fixed upon this subject by a great authority, Sir William Jones. He remarks upon a Persian fragment, which traces the descent of the Afghans from Berkia, the son of Saul, that it may lead to interesting disclosures. The Afghans are said by the Persian historians, to be descended from the Jews, and their language resembles the Hebrew. Mr. Elphinstone remarks, that they have the history of the Jews to the captivity, though altered by some wild fables. Sir John Malcolm acknowledges that they differ from the nations round them, but doubts the tradition of their descent. Some of the Missionaries, however, confirm what is said of the resemblance of their language to the Hebrew, and are persuaded of their descent from the Hebrew race.

It has been said of late years, that since the Russian embassies into Asia, Jews have been found in Bucharria, who are supposed to be the descendants of the ten tribes. They are also found in Bombay and Cannamore, but so resembling the natives, as not to be distinguished from them but by inquiry and attentive observation. In dialect and manners they betray their affinity to the Hebrew race.

Supposing all these facts to be precisely as here stated, we have still no evidence that these are descendants of the lost tribes ; but rather the contrary, for it appears that many call themselves *Jehudi* or Jews. Now, though we are not careful to distinguish between Israel and Judah, it is evident that a strong line of separation was drawn by themselves, both from habit and hatred ; and a descendant from one of the lost tribes would have called himself by any other name in preference to that of Jew. There can be no doubt that Hebrews are found in these regions as described, but the probability is, that they came there by gradual emigration, when the nation began to outgrow its bounds, after the captivity, or that the destruction of Jerusalem and the troubles that followed, drove them into

the heart of Asia for a shelter. Had they been placed there at the time when Samaria was destroyed, the revolutions of those countries would have removed their peculiarities more decidedly; but supposing their emigration to date from a later period, they are in the state in which we might expect to find them, slowly and sullenly conforming to the habits of the world. Mr. Milman has found strong reasons for believing, in opposition to the common opinion, that a great proportion of the tribes returned and became Samaritans; if so, there is no need of accounting for them, for as many Israelites were left, as usually survive the overthrow and dispersion of any people. The Jews, however, were dispersed under different circumstances, and were bound together by a stronger national tie. Though every where cast out, they have secured a place in every nation; though every where put down, they have every where succeeded at last in their attempt to rise. More than a thousand years ago, Khazar, on the western shore of the Caspian, was a Jewish kingdom. They gained admission even into China, and contrived to secure the respect, even of that jealous people; so that it is not necessary to resort to the earlier captivity, to account for the appearance of Jews in any part of the world, beside that the credit of history is shaken by theories, in which imagination bears so distinguished a part.

The question is often asked, why, if the Jews were in possession of great advantages, were they kept studiously apart from the rest of the world? Why were not other nations permitted to borrow their moral light and Sacred inspiration? It can easily be made to appear, that while it was the object of their statesmen to keep them apart from others, they were in successive ages thrown into direct association with other nations by circumstances, over which they had no control. Even before their political existence began,—while they were still in bondage,—they were in the midst of the most enlightened of nations. Egypt was the fountain of civilization. Greece acknowledged her obligations to Egypt as her intellectual parent; and though darkness has been over all that land for ages, there is no doubt that it was once superior to the rest of the world. Moses also, while he endeavored to secure his people from the Egyptian superstitions, was deeply indebted to their learning. What bearing the residence of the Israelites there had upon the destinies of either nation, it is not now easy to tell. The years passed there were not all lost in suffering and bondage;

even the slavish employments to which a new line of kings condemned them, aided their improvement in mechanical skill, and their masters had the opportunity of drawing from the treasury of the Jews whatever moral or religious instruction it contained. But darkness rests upon this period; even the duration of their residence in Egypt cannot be determined. No one believes the statements of Josephus, except where he describes what passed before his eyes. Much has been expected from the discoveries of Champollion, but the naked and distant facts at present ascertained, are as far from a satisfactory history as a skeleton is from a living form. If a conjecture of Whiston, lately revived, which makes Sethos or Sesostris, the same with one of the Pharaohs of the Old Testament, be true;—especially, if he be the same with Egyptus, who compelled his brother Danaus to take refuge in Greece, we shall no longer be at a loss to account for the strong, occasional resemblance to the Jewish traditions, which is found in the mythology of Greece; but nothing now ascertained in this way, is so important as the tomb discovered by Belzoni, which contained the ashes of Necho, whose victories are recorded in the Bible, and bore on its walls colored representations of the different nations which he subdued.

This, however, was when they were poor in improvement, and needed to borrow from others; in the reigns of David and Solomon they were rich, and were able to pay their debts to all the nations. They had a friendly intercourse with the cities of the Phenician confederacy, which must have spread their name through all the shores of the Mediterranean; in the opposite direction it was carried by their own fleets on the Red Sea. They also kept up an inland trade with Egypt and Arabia, bringing from the latter gold, precious stones, incense, sandal-wood and spices. The stream of trade too from Assyria to Tyre, passed through their country, and brought fertility wherever it flowed. They drew supplies from Tarshish and Ophir, of which, if they were in fact names of particular places, which is more than doubtful, we know nothing but that one lay toward the east, the other toward the west; and their voyages in both these directions were more extensive than can be conceived by one, who knows that the ships of the Evangelists were fishing boats, and their sea a small lake. It seems impossible to believe the statement of Herodotus, that the Tyrians sailed round the continent of Africa; but it is

certain that they ventured beyond the outlets, both of the eastern and western seas.

Meantime the great Assyrian empire was throwing a broad shadow from the rising sun, over Palestine to the borders of the Nile. With this power they held close communion, whether of peace or war. When Nebuchadnezzar had built up his kingdom of Babylon out of its mighty fragments, and made himself for a time the greatest monarch of the world, the character of the Hebrews passed in review before him and his people, and both had cause to admire their attachment to their religion. During their heart-breaking captivity, the Jews evidently secured the respect of their masters by their self-denial in temptation, their constancy in suffering, and by the 'not unmanly tears' with which they mourned for their country. Their high poetical talent also was admired, for when they were required to take down their harps from the willows, the request was made, not in mockery, but respect; their minstrelsy fascinated a luxurious people, who had nothing that would compare with the inspirations of the Jews.

No sooner had the decline of Babylon commenced, than a new empire rose, created by the genius of Cyrus, who trained the Persians to hardship, till they became powerful arms in the hands of his ambition. And again we find the Jews, by the changes of affairs, thrown into the midst of the Persians, in such a way as to secure the highest respect for them and their Sacred writings. Though in bondage, they were a people that could not be despised. Cyrus, when he issued an order restoring them to their country, and recognizing the existence of their God, must have been acquainted with their history and literature, and his subjects must have taken some pains to know why such favor was extended to such a people. So that although they returned in heaviness, lamenting that their glory was departed, there probably never was a moment when they stood so high, or exerted so wide an influence, as when they again took possession of their desolated land.

When the Persian empire sunk under the arms of Alexander, we find the Jews, whose country was so often the battle-field of rival powers, again standing upright at the conqueror's side. He treated them with sufficient respect; but his generals did not exempt them from the fate of the nations which they crushed with oppression. Still, they did not neglect any of the advantages which their position gave them, and as soon as the



Greek became the common language of the Macedonian empire, their Scriptures were translated into it, and so generally spread, that those versions have supplanted the original. The Alexandrian Jews applied themselves to Grecian literature and philosophy, thus securing the influence which learning, or the reputation of it, never fails to give. It cannot be doubted that the Greeks returned this interest, and took the opportunity of learning all that the Jews could teach them.

Every one knows, that when the Romans were lords of the ascendant, the Jews became their allies first, and afterwards their vassals,—a humiliation which the proud Hebrew race severely felt, though they shared it in common with all the rest of the world. Their kings and tetrarchs drew their breath of life from Rome; and though the masters of the world were not remarkable for enlightened curiosity, the habits of their fierce and intractable subjects in Judea must have engaged the attention of some inquiring minds. We have ample proof of this in Tacitus, the most exact of their historians, who speaks of the expectation of a deliverer, as drawn from the sacred books of the Hebrew priests. This shows that those books were known, and whoever is familiar with Virgil's *Pollio* will be satisfied that they were read. When there were Romans in Jerusalem and Jews in Rome, it is easier to explain how they may have fallen in the poet's way, than to believe that passages of that remarkable poem came from any other than Hebrew inspiration.

We trust that we have furnished an answer to those who wonder why any privileges which the Jews possessed, should not have been placed within the reach of other nations of the world. Their separation was not personal, but moral: while they kept their peculiar habits and institutions, they were thrown in a surprising manner, into intimate relations with every great empire, as fast as a new one was built on the changing sands of human affairs;—from the time when Abraham first went down to Egypt, to the hour when one of the last great efforts of the Roman arms overthrew their temple and city.

The popular impressions with respect to the character and fate of the Jews are not so distinct as so important a history requires. We know of no divine inflictions; the punishments of individuals and nations are the natural consequences of their conduct; the misdeeds of communities, as well as the sins of individuals, put an end, sometimes forever, to that quiet which it is the best prosperity of men and nations to enjoy. The

founder of the Hebrew nation, acting under the authority of Heaven, had framed a constitution for this favored people, which prescribed pursuits adapted to their soil and character, guarded them against the excesses of passion, bound up the hands of national ambition, and gave each individual as much freedom as was consistent with the general welfare. It protected the possessions of the rich and the earnings of the poor, encouraged habits of industry, and set bars to violence and corruption. Had the Hebrews been content to sit down quietly under the shadow of these institutions, they would not have had wealth to invite oppression, and would not have lost strength to repel any invasion of adventurers. But they could not understand the wisdom of their law, and disregarded it so completely, that the very book was lost; and when it was accidentally recovered in the reign of Josiah, all hearts were filled with dismay to find how widely they had wandered. Still they were not instructed by experience;—even Hezekiah, one of their best kings, could not resist the strange ambition of displaying his wealth to robbers. The natural consequences followed. As their welfare depended on the observance of their civil system, their misfortunes followed hard upon its violation. Their occasional reformation restored their character and happiness for a time; but the whole tendency of the state was downward; and the inspired prophets foretold with amazing and awful exactness, all the particulars of its righteous doom. We cannot help thinking, that the national character is too unfavorably represented on this account. The same argument is made use of, by which the friends of Job attempted to convince him that he was more guilty than others, because he suffered more. Their character was not an amiable one; but it will be observed, that the severity of the prophets, as well as of our Saviour, falls not so much on the people, as on those who misled them. A deep and burning spirit of patriotism was their strongest passion; and it cannot be denied, that they exhibited a resolution when their country was in question, which under better guidance might have made them a virtuous people. But under the direction of the Pharisees, it led to fatal results, even to the barbarous murder of Jesus Christ. But it should be remembered, that when John appeared, calling them to repentance and reform, he became their favorite, and their demagogues dared not say a word against him. The same popularity attended Jesus Christ, though his appearance disappointed

all their hopes, which for centuries had looked for his coming in the high and commanding majesty of the conqueror and king. It required the most unwearied malice on the part of their leaders, to weaken his influence, and to work them up to that mad excitement, in which they demanded his blood. All this, we think, is implied in the memorable words, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’

We mention this, because there is a prevailing error on this subject, and the sympathies of men are unfairly divided between the Jews and Romans. Josephus, who wrote under the eye of the conquerors, has been too long suffered to mislead men by those representations of the atrocity of the Jews and the humanity of the Romans, by which he endeavored to cover the shame of deserting a cause, for which his countrymen thought it a privilege to die. Let it be remembered, that whatever might have been the national guilt which brought them into bondage, their rebellion was an effort to be free;—a rebellion, occasioned not by the extortions of Hebrew vice-roys, nor the severity of Roman procurators, hard as those evils were for their proud spirits to endure; but, after years of suffering, they rose in a universal flame, the moment an insult was offered to their religion. If any respect is due to patriotic self-devotion, we cannot withhold it from theirs. And it is an evidence of the unbounded power which a popular historian has over the moral judgment, that even in this country, we should so long have sympathised with Hume against the English patriots, and with Josephus against the Jews. For nothing can be more absurd than to look on the Romans with complacency, because they were employed on this occasion, like the barbarian who afterwards overran their empire, as a scourge in the hands of God. It is quite too much to be called on to admire the humanity of Titus, whose heart was not all stone, though it seems that he tortured his wretched prisoners till no more ground remained for a cross to stand upon. The march of their armies was well described as the ‘curse of desolation;’ wherever was found the ‘carcass’ of a fated city, there one might be sure that their ‘eagles were gathered;’ when they spread their pinions, it was like the waving of the death-angel’s wing; and yet from our youth, we are taught to bless the name of the ravenous and grasping plunderer, and it is bad taste to give even the alms of compassion to the memory of his victim.

We do not deny that the annals of the Jews abounded in

crimes; but we have no idea of bringing the Romans into this contrast, for the purpose of exalting that great pest of the world. Those who measure character by fortune, must remember that the Eternal City was at no distant period, compelled to drain the cup she had poured out so liberally for the nations. *Her* temples were overthrown; the tombs on which her great names were written, were defaced by barbarian hands; and, while in every nation there are living memorials of the Hebrew race, there is not one who can trace his heraldry from Rome. It is the duty of all, who would give a right direction to moral feeling, to resist this unhealthy admiration of lawless violence, whether of ancient or modern times. There is no need of recommending these splendid sins; power will always command respect, and the red right hand of the conqueror will cast aside moral as well as physical resistance. Still it is not well to keep incense constantly burning on this altar of human blood; for, though these great tyrants of man are not common, all the relations of life are affected by a sentiment, which encourages false ambition, and turns real glory into shame.

We said in the outset, that we should treat this merely as a civil history, though we regard it in another and more important light; for in this view alone, the character and fortunes of the Jews are interesting and instructive to other nations; to none more so than our own. Mr. Jefferson had no great respect for this history. Did it never occur to him, that the Hebrew statesman, thousands of years before himself, had regarded agriculture as the proper employment of a free people, and all other pursuits as subsidiary to this? It is true that the Hebrew was a religious state, and we presume that Mr. Jefferson himself founded republican institutions, not on external power, but a sense of duty existing in the hearts of the people. Moses provided also for education in all such knowledge as was within the reach of such an age, by directing parents to make it a point of duty to instruct their children in the national history and the maxims of their law. To us it seems, that in all this there was something not easily explained in ordinary ways. A constitution which allows to each subject a large share of personal freedom, and an influence that may be felt in the state;—which establishes the authority of government upon the good sense and conviction of the people;—which leaves it in their power to submit or obey at pleasure, influenced only by a clear perception of the results of obedience or corruption, which

were distinctly seen by the prophet's eye, and set before them with the eloquence of the prophet's tongue ;—this certainly is not a very simple thing. So far from being one of the first suggestions of civil science, it is the very last result at which the wisdom and experience of ages arrive. Even now, it is a problem hardly solved, though the revolutions of nations have been almost as many as the revolutions of the earth round the sun. Doubtless the details of his system were imperfectly developed ; but the miracle is, that he should have been able to lay down so exact a plan for his national prosperity, as to predict to the letter all the evils that would follow from its violation. Those who allow to Moses no higher inspiration than that of talent, must confess that there was something marvellously bold and original in his system, and a sagacity in his foreboding of consequences, not easily matched in the history of political wisdom. We should suppose that with them it must be even more striking, than to such as fall in with the prevailing belief, which represents him as acting under the dictation of God. But we will not argue the point here ; for another interesting question presents itself, respecting the modern history of the Jews.

Their history since the destruction of Jerusalem, is truly wonderful, and affords a most striking testimony to our religion. Never was vessel dashed upon the rock into smaller fragments, than the Hebrew nation in that tremendous overthrow ; a million of its best lives were sacrificed ; all its noblest blood was shed ; the temple was ruined from topmost tower to lowest foundation-stone, and a cold and heavy desolation thrown over all the borders of the land. And this was the people, who deemed themselves the favorite sons of God ! for whom he had suffered the bright light of prophecy to send its unnatural dawn far into the depth of coming ages ; whom he had suffered, though unworthy, to lean so confidently upon his everlasting arm ! One would have thought that so profound a calamity would have turned every Hebrew heart to stone. But every thing about this strange people disappoints predictions founded on human nature. Fortresses still existed in Judea, and, though shaken by the thunder of Jerusalem when it fell, held out without a sign of dismay. Masada was the last that fell into the hands of the Romans. They had surrounded it, and at last succeeded in battering down its walls ; but when the night brought a pause to the combat, the Jewish leader assembled

his comrades and told them that God had forsaken his people ; still he was more merciful than the Romans, and he proposed that they should fire the city, and offer themselves, their wives and children, as a last burnt offering upon a glorious altar. They approved his counsel ; embraced their wives and children with tears, and then stabbed them to the heart. Having chosen ten of their number by lot as executioners, they embraced the corpses of their loved ones, and submitted their necks to the blow. The ten then cast lots ; and when nine had fallen by each other's hands, the last survivor set fire to the palace, and drove the sword to his own heart. When the Romans entered the city, they were affrighted at the desolation. Savage and horrible as such self-devotion is, it is impossible not to admire the strength of heart which it discovers ; and, without inspiration, one might foretell, that so long as a solitary heart of this description was left to beat, it would treasure its national distinction as its sole remaining pride.

Thus, in truth, it has been in every country under the sun. They were scattered to the four winds, like the ashes of their temple ; and now the keel of the adventurer can hardly reach a shore, where the Jews have not been before him. Gain is the only avenue to power which their feet are permitted to tread, and they walk in it with an industry that never sleeps. Unsocial as they are, go where they will, they adapt themselves with wonderful flexibility to the habits of the people. To a certain extent they mingle with others in the intercourse of life ; but there is a veil in their hearts, like that of the temple, never lifted ; a sanctuary, into which the eye of no Gentile is permitted to look. There is no region in which they cannot make themselves a home ; and yet they draw a line broad and deep between themselves and others, by keeping up their ancient usages, circumcision, abstinence from unclean meats, and all animal food which has not been killed by a Jew, by assembling in their synagogues, and there worshipping God in the language of their fathers. They are at home, and yet are exiles ; familiar, and yet strangers ; content with an unenviable lot in the land of their adoption, and yet constantly looking over its boundaries to their own holy land ; having every thing to humble and depress them, and yet looking forward with triumphant hope to a time, when the coming of the Messiah, 'like the lightning shining from the east to the west,' shall shiver and melt their chains.

It is impossible to tell when and how the scattered fragments of the wreck were collected and bound together ; but not long after the fall of Jerusalem, we find two Hebrew communities ; the one on the other side of the Euphrates, under the Prince of the Captivity, the other on this side the river, under the Patriarch of the West. The school of Jamnia, which pretended to be the Sanhedrim saved from the general ruin, obtained great authority ; and, as it was principally spiritual in its pretensions, it did not excite the jealousy of the Romans. It is curious to see how a gradual, but unconscious preparation had been made for a monument of this kind, flattering to the pride of the Jews, but as useless in itself as the fabled pillars that survived the Flood. The priesthood had been gradually superseded in the course of ages. The authority of tradition overshadowed that of Scripture, and the interpreters of this new volume acquired unbounded influence. At the same time, the worship of the synagogue grew up in place of that of the temple ; so that when the ruin seemed complete, a new worship and new priesthood were already created to their hands. Even this was enough to give them a feeling of strength ; and before the generation that saw the fall of Jerusalem had passed away, the whole body of Jews west of the Euphrates rose, in a fire that spread at once into a conflagration, and was only extinguished with the loss of six hundred thousand men. The Emperor then issued edicts meant to destroy their race ; but at this moment, apparently so uninviting, a pretended Messiah, calling himself the ‘Son of the Star,’ appeared ; set up his standard in Jerusalem, and the Jews poured in by thousands, with a spirit unbroken by disaster, ready to make a new appeal to arms. But their king was slain ; the plough passed over the fresh ruins of the city, and all Jews were forbidden to come near it again.

But even then, when Jerusalem was left a city of the dead, and for the third time since our Saviour’s prophecy, ‘the mountains were melted with their blood,’ their courage and faith endured. Not sixty years after, we find a Patriarch at Tiberias in this very region, whose authority was acknowledged by all west of the Euphrates, while the Prince of the Captivity still held his melancholy state upon the eastern side. He, too, had suffered his share ; and at the very moment when the Roman power was about to crush him, the accession of a new Emperor drew off its armies, and left his dominion like a ship-

wrecked vessel, saved by the sinking of the tide. In this Patriarchate at Tiberias, there was no power but such as was conceded to it by public opinion ;—but its legates visited all the Jewish establishments in various lands, and received the tribute, which was regularly paid. Such was the force of this Rabbinical dominion, that for a time, the Prince of the Captivity submitted to its power. One of these Patriarchs, in the third century, was the author of the celebrated Mishna, or code of traditional law. The western prince again recovered his ascendancy, and governed in Babylonia with the splendor of a king. In the schools of his dominion, comments were made on the law and the Mishna, which were embodied in the Gemara ; the Mishna and Gemara together make up the well known Babylonian Talmud. This Rabbinical lore has been extremely unfortunate for the Jews ; it has weighed upon them like a millstone, and prevented their entering the lists of intellectual glory. In fact, all their apparent prosperity at this time was a calamity, because it served to draw upon them the attention of the world.

The patronage or opposition of the Emperors could not do much to uphold the faint shadow of a state which the Patriarchate presented. It was nothing more than a standard floating on a dismantled tower. Both the Patriarch and the Prince of the Captivity seemed to be upheld by a feeling of national pride, without any substantial authority, and without any thing to sustain them in the changes of the world ; so that even before the barbarians flowed in upon the Roman empire, the Patriarchate had gone down. The Principality, being out of the path of revolutions, escaped till the tenth century, gladdening the hearts of the Jews with the sight of its hollow glories, but all the while wearing away. We may say on the whole, that the dark ages found the Jews nearly where the fall of Jerusalem left them ; they had not yet found a resting-place in the world.

While the Jews were suffering every thing under the Christian Emperors, rather than give up the least observance of their religion, the Samaritans were more disposed to bow their heads to the storm. They eluded the severe laws of Justinian, by submitting to baptism as a matter of necessity, and then quietly returning to the faith of their fathers. We have never been satisfied with the prevailing opinion, that the Samaritans are the descendants of the idolaters (introduced by



Esarhaddon) who gradually adopted the religion of the land. We do not think that Scripture requires us to believe that the ten tribes were so completely rooted out. The Jews from their prescriptive hatred of the rival house of Israel, always represented the Samaritans as Cutheans, but their evidence must be admitted with caution in a case of the kind. It is admitted that a remnant escaped; and it would seem that it was large enough to keep up the old religion of the land. In our Saviour's time they were expecting the Messiah, and though he was reserved in declaring to the Jews that he was their expected king, he announced it without hesitation to the Samaritans; and if he charged them with 'worshipping they knew not what,' the charge would apply with equal force to the Jews, who believed in the sacredness of their temple with the same superstition. It is singular, that after the persecutions of Justinian, they were almost lost to history for ages, till at last, in the seventeenth century, a remnant, like the mutineers of the Bounty, were discovered on the side of their own holy mountain. There they had looked securely down upon the changes of the world, preserving their ancient religion, and treasuring most of all the Scriptures in the Samaritan or old Hebrew character. The Jews during their captivity had borrowed the Chaldean letters. From their correspondence with Scaliger, in reply to his inquiries, they seem to observe the law of Moses with more strictness in many points than the Jews themselves.

When the Mussulman crescent rose in the East, it turned the tide of human affairs in favor of the Jews. Mahomet was very desirous to make the Jews his converts; and as he acknowledged Moses as a prophet, insisted upon circumcision, and made the Unity of God the chief doctrine of his religion, they were disposed to favor him against the Christians. They must have seen too, that his armies were likely to prevail, led on by such chiefs as Khaled, who, when advised to repose a moment from the weariness of a day of battle, replied, 'There is rest enough in the world to come.' But Mahomet required too much of the Jews. He wished to make them disciples as well as partisans, and failing in his attempts, he became their enemy, and persecuted them to the end of his days. But they fared better with his successors, who required no such impossibilities; and it was not without satisfaction, that they saw Omar take Jerusalem from the Christians. Even when he

built the mosque which bore his name upon the ruins of their temple, they found consolation in the thought, that the Christians were effectually humbled. Some writers have thought, that a wide conspiracy in favor of the Mahometans was formed among the Jews; but their character is proof enough that they engaged in no such alliance. The natural union of interest and feeling was all that was needed; and we must say, though it is not to the honor of human nature, that nothing binds human hearts so firmly together as hatred to a common foe.

The conquests of Mahomet set the whole world in motion for several centuries. His successors having acquired the thirst of adventure, were not content with the quiet possession of Arabia and Syria; they poured like a flood into Egypt, and swept along the whole southern coast of the Mediterranean; then they passed into Spain, where they established an empire, and as if nothing could set bounds to their enterprise, penetrated into the heart of France. The Saracens also insulted the declining majesty of Rome. But almost every step of their desolating march was over a Christian nation; the pride of the Christian world was deeply wounded, and two or three centuries after, we find the whole Christian world in motion along the northern shore, to avenge the injuries of the cross. The whole course of this revolving circle, had an important bearing upon the interests of the Jews. They are supposed to have had an agency in bringing about the first invasion of Spain by the Saracens, in which Roderick lost his life and crown; an agency, however, which was fully justified by the cruelty they endured from the Gothic kings. These troubled times brought them into notice. Their superior intelligence and education made it necessary to give them offices of profit and trust; and when Charlemagne determined on sending an embassy to Haroun al Raschid, one of this race was employed to represent the European sovereign, and to conduct the diplomatic intercourse between Bagdad and Aix-la-Chapelle.

The conquest of Spain by the Moors, and the establishment of Charlemagne's great empire, were circumstances which threw a gleam of light upon the dark current of the Jewish history; and we are thus particular in allusion to them, because in that age, the Jews fixed that character which they retain at the present day. They did not lose the oppor-

tunity ; but exerting themselves with their usual sagacious and untiring industry, they became rich ;—every stream of commerce in every nation flowed with golden sands for them. In France they took a high stand, and in Spain they were hardly distinguished in wealth, honor, and trust, from their Saracen masters. But the natural result was, that when the wild spirit of chivalry began to prevail in the world, ruling in the hearts of men by maxims with which morals and humanity had very little to do ;—the fortunes of the great were exhausted by martial extravagance, the earnings of the poor were drained by oppression, and as the Jews offered a vast resource to beggarly nobles and princes, their wealth at once became a crime. It was discovered that they were guilty of the murder of our Saviour nearly a thousand years before, and for this, it was but reasonable that they should be insulted and plundered in every Christian land. The Jews, with their usual still fortitude, prepared not only to meet, but to draw advantage to themselves from the storm. The soldier of the cross must have his arms ; and in the excitement of the moment, the Crusaders were ready to pledge every thing for gold. But when the time for payment came, they found that their revenues had not been increased by the prodigality of war, and they were obliged to resort to other means to redeem the pledges they had given. The Jews were then exposed to all kinds of violence ; their wealth was confiscated, and their persons banished. Philip Augustus and St. Louis in France, distinguished themselves by this saintly extortion. In the reign of Richard I. of England, they were exposed to one of the most infamous massacres recorded in history, and passed through repeated changes of hope and suffering under his contemptible successor. England has nothing to boast of in this dark registry. The only ray of mercy and honor that could be seen in all Europe was in Germany, where Frederic II., the most accomplished prince of his age, had penetration enough to see the baseness of the charges brought against them. When informed, according to the usual scandal of those times, that some Christian children had been found in the house of a Jew, murdered in preparation for the Passover, ‘Bury them,’ was his only reply. Happy would it have been for Europe, if other sovereigns had resembled him ; though superstition had a hold on his dominions, it had none upon his mind : even as a crusader, the grandson of Barbarossa effected by peaceable

means what others could not accomplish by war, and left a name as enviable among the infidels, as that of Saladin has ever been among the Christians.

The character of the Jews has remained nearly the same to the present day, only varying with the times, not by any wide and decisive change in the prosperity or improvement of the race. But it is needless to dwell upon this period, since it has been set before the public eye in the splendid panorama of *Ivanhoe* ; where we see at a glance the sufferings to which they were exposed, and the fortitude with which they stooped to meet them,—the contempt and hatred with which they were universally regarded, and the power which they contrived to gain notwithstanding,—the low avarice to which they descended, and the traditional enthusiasm inspired by the remembrance of their religion and their holy land. In the delightful vision of *Rebecca*, perhaps the loveliest portrait the imagination ever drew, we see the gentle firmness formed by long exposure to danger, contrasted in *Rowena* with the superiority of one, who had breathed nothing but the incense of chivalrous adoration ; and we fear, that one touch of this celestial pencil has done more for this injured race, than justice and humanity in the last thousand years. It is well for the world, that this supernatural power of genius resides in such a conscientious and honorable hand. While we acknowledge the moral taste of Shakspeare in respect to character, and confess that he does not attempt to give the guilty any lasting attraction, we regret that his *Merchant of Venice* has done so much to associate all that is savage and rapacious with the name of Jew. We cannot blame him for sharing the prejudices of his time, but we certainly are glad that there is a power to correct his errors, and to balance the impression against the Jews which his painting has made, by one in their favor, drawn with equal talent, and from its nature resistless and enchanting.

We are sorry that there is so little to be said of the literature of the Jews. The fetters of Rabbiniism have been so closely folded about their minds, as to prevent free and vigorous action. They have had little of the quiet which is most favorable to intellectual exertion, and we take it, that no great literary improvement can be expected from those, who are constantly weighed down by the millstone of banishment or bondage. The most remarkable person in this department, who has ever sprung from the race, is the modern Men-

delsohn, whose reputation in Germany is thought to have bettered the condition of the Jews. If, however, his opinions were, as we understand them, that the Jews had a revealed law, but no revealed religion beside the law of nature, the Jews must have dreaded his heresy more than they exulted in his success. Their feeling towards him was not unlike that of the Hindoos toward Rammohun Roy at the present day ; but they forgave him his deism, so long as he did not embrace Christianity.

It is not surprising that a people who have suffered so much by that sickness of heart which arises from hope deferred, should have been exposed to frequent delusion. When they have been so long watching the heavens, ready to believe that every change was a sign of the Messiah's coming, any impostor might calculate upon their easy credulity. Before our Saviour, there were false Christs in great numbers, and since his time the Jews have been repeatedly misled by adventurers. The most remarkable deception of this kind has been practised in modern times. In 1666, Sabbathai Sevi, a person obscurely born, who appeared in Smyrna, took advantage of his remarkable personal beauty to carry on this daring imposture. He formed the design when young, and prepared his way by affecting uncommon self-denial. When the public mind seemed ready for the declaration, he announced himself as the Messiah. The Rabbins resisted him, and drove him from place to place, till he reached Jerusalem, where he remained, gathering proselytes, for many years. His declaration excited a strong feeling against him, but one of his most distinguished opposers suddenly falling dead, the accident was interpreted as a testimony of Heaven in his favor. Then the glad tidings spread throughout Europe and Asia, that the Messiah was come ;—labor was suspended, and the Jews every where waited the call to rise. Meantime Sabbathai found it no easy matter to ride in the whirlwind he had raised. The ardor of his partisans hurried him to Constantinople to confront the Sultan. That monarch made him this fair and reasonable proposal, 'that the Messiah should be shot at with three poisoned arrows, and if he proved invulnerable he would himself own his title ; if he declined this offer, he must either become a Mahometan or be put to death.' Sabbathai was not long embarrassed by uncertainty ; he declared himself a Mahometan without any unnecessary delay, and was dismissed by the Sultan with

honor instead of contempt. He then supported the double character which he had assumed with such expedition, and his followers were fast going over to Mahomet in imitation of his example, when the Rabbins succeeded in gaining the ear of the Sultan, who imprisoned him in Belgrade, where he died a natural death in his fifty-first year. Gross and obvious as this imposture was, it long survived him, and his followers are said to be found even now in various parts of the world. This shows how ready they are to grasp at any hope, when faith is almost changed into despair, not only by the growth of Christianity, but by their own tradition. This is found in the Talmud in the form of a prophecy by Elijah, that the world is to continue six thousand years;—two thousand years without law, two thousand years under the law, and two thousand under the Messiah's reign. The first expired in Abraham's life, the second when our Saviour really came. Such a tradition, unimportant as it is to others, one would suppose would be disheartening to them, when they can only evade it, by saying that the advent is delayed on account of the sins of the world; the very sins which the Messiah was to come in order to take away.

It is a little singular that Cromwell and Napoleon each took an interest in the Jews, and endeavored to remove the ban which rested upon the race. Such was the prejudice of the day, that Cromwell could do but little in their favor, though the republicans were not zealous against them. Harrington, in his Oceana, recommended the sale of Ireland to the Jews. The necessities of Charles II. and his court, did more than Cromwell's decision, and after the Restoration, the Jews crept quietly into the kingdom, where their descendants remain to the present day. The other great enemy of oppression, Napoleon, caused questions to be proposed to the Jews respecting their allegiance to France, and having received the most satisfactory answers, he assembled a Sanhedrim for the purpose of re-establishing the worship of the Synagogue in the empire. It is somewhat in the nature of a reproach to the world, that the Jews should find only these eminent philanthropists, to enforce such plain maxims of justice and humanity. It is to be hoped, that after the lapse of some centuries, Christian nations will begin to discover, that their prosperity and religion are not secured by absurd systems of exclusion, which, instead of being a safeguard, are only so many challenges to

those without, to batter down the walls which shut them out from the rights they inherit from God and nature.

It is not easy to estimate the numbers of a race who are scattered to the four winds of heaven. The returns made to Bonaparte fixed their number at three millions. This statement, in Mr. Milman's opinion, is too low; he is inclined to raise it as high as five millions. Even this is but a small number, compared with former times. In France there are about forty or fifty thousand. They are still excluded from Spain by an ancient law. In Great Britain their number is variously stated, but not exceeding twenty-five thousand. There they are harassed by those legal disabilities, which answer no purpose but that of insult and vexation. The oath required on the faith of a Christian, excludes them from Parliament and many other offices; and what is more important to them, they cannot take out their freedom as citizens of London, and thus are perplexed and fettered in their trade. Their numbers in our country are small. They do not seem willing to put the ocean between themselves and their father-land, though they care not over how many leagues of earth they travel. We have reason to be proud at the thought, that such as do fix their residence among us, are subjected to no inconvenience in any part of our land. If there is any decided feeling towards them, it is that of respect for a race, who, as we learn from our Scriptures, were once under the guardianship of Heaven, and are still preserving with unexampled fortitude, whatever monuments of their former distinction the revolutions of the world have left them. We do not rank their religion with heathen superstitions, but regard it as a revelation from above, differing from Christianity as the cold grey dawning from the perfect day. We consider them entitled to our sympathy from their sorrows, and their religious devotion. And if any one tells us that they are suffering a merited punishment for their national sins, though we do not contradict him, we say that they are not the only people that ever sinned, and that in all cases the judgments of Heaven can be executed without our helping hand.

We are not inclined to debate with the Jews the great question, concerning their restoration to their native land. It is this expectation more than their physical characteristics, which prevents their finding a home in any land to which they go. It has supported them in all their reverses; but the lamp which gives so friendly a light in the darkness, looks intrusive and un-

natural after the dawning of the day. Napoleon endeavored to amalgamate them with the people of France ; but his ways of effecting political changes were not particularly winning ; and such changes are beyond the reach of power. It is certainly worth while to ascertain whether there is any natural obstacle in the way of this assimilation, or whether it can be removed like the blue ribbon which the ancient Hebrews were told to wear upon their garments. If it be found that Heaven has ordained their perpetual separation, plans for their moral restoration may be abandoned. But till this is placed beyond question, we may be permitted to doubt, whether, when all the purposes of the Hebrew law were fulfilled by the coming of Christianity, it was not intended that they should no longer be distinguished from other nations ; whether the prophecies of their destiny are not made good by nearly two thousand years of woe ; and whether there is any revealed purpose yet to be answered, by holding them up as a spectacle to the world. At all events, if they are to be restored to the land of their fathers, and to cherish the wild growth of their patriotism again on the soil where it naturally springs, the prospect is as distant as any thing human can be ; and meantime their moral restoration might begin—the nations should remove their chains to the last filing ; men should look upon the Jew as a man, and show him what he has never yet had reason to discover, that there is an enlarged, liberal, and enlightened benevolence taught in the Gospel.

We desire to speak with respect of all religious exertions, but we must say that nothing seems so much like mockery as the attempts made to convert the Jews. This benevolent zeal assumes, that they stand on the same ground with the heathen, a compliment neither deserved, nor likely to be gratefully received by such a people, and then employs, as the instruments of their conversion, those who have deserted them to embrace Christianity, and who, of course, are least likely of all human beings, to gain their confidence, or even attention. To us this seems like employing Arnold to persuade the Revolutionary army to submit, or Julian the apostate to convert the Christians. We should remember that all to whom our religion is offered, look for its character to Christian nations, and find there a full reply to all arguments that can be presented. The religion of peace has never kept the regions that profess it from the sins and sorrows of war. The law of good-will has



not yet made Christians kind or just to each other ; and how can the Jew be expected to embrace a faith, which not only comes to him without any moral superiority in his eyes to his own, but has been the statute to which his persecutors have always appealed, as their warrant for oppressing his race ? Much must be done by way of preparation, before they can be made to listen to the claims of Christianity ; and they will not do so much as this, till they learn that it is not Christianity that inflicts their wrongs, and that Christians in their hatred, revenge, and persecution, are doing violence to their religion. We take encouragement, however, from observing the effect of that religion. Like all moral means, it operates slowly ; but its effect begins at last to appear. Nations the most decidedly separated by manners, language, and institutions, begin to flow together ;—a tide of improvement begins to rise and swell, on which the humble and oppressed are borne upward, while towers, palaces and thrones are sinking under its waters.

Before we close, we must express the pleasure with which we have read this work. We took it up with no great expectations. We had known the author as a poet of talent, though not of the first order ; there seemed to be something formal and unmanageable in his powers, which made his success in any given effort rather a matter of accident than of calculation. But in this history, his stateliness is laid by in a measure, and what remains is not unsuited to the subject ; his fine imagination, too, appears to advantage in an attempt, where the writer's success, like that of the explorer in Herculaneuin, partly depends upon the brilliancy of the torch which he bears. We should not cite his work as a grave authority, nor was it so intended ; his aim was to make a popular and entertaining history, and in this he has perfectly succeeded. He has not walked in the beaten track, but has formed opinions for himself, and expressed them with manly freedom ; so that though there are points in which we differ from him, we do not think it necessary to discuss them, being persuaded that if the book is read in the spirit in which it was written, it will lead to no serious errors. We therefore recommend it to all who wish to be acquainted with the character and history of the Jews.